

at a given time. The purpose of televising the debates is not to show how smart we are, or that we are present in the House, but rather to inform the public on what goes on there.

We all know that at a certain time, on such a date, a newscast will be televised on a certain bill to inform the public. This is somewhat similar to when the House of Commons is to be photographed for the pamphlet on the House of Commons: everyone manages to be present.

If the members attach such importance to a mere photograph, how much more enthusiasm they will show if every Monday night, at eight o'clock, by mutual agreement with the leaders of the parties, the proceedings on a bill are televised. This will encourage the members to attend the sittings of the house, and we can then make a better impression on Canadian citizens.

This could also be improved by televising a beautiful political "match," provided of course we give the required facilities to the producers.

We must admit that we do not provide the pressmen with all the necessary facilities, because nowadays, they must observe a rigorous discipline while playing an essential role.

I hope that the committee on procedure and organization will study this problem seriously and that it will soon present a report to the House.

● (9:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, in the limited time left at my disposal tonight I will endeavour to state why I am opposed to this motion. It was interesting to listen to the previous speaker. He spoke at length on the subject matter of the motion, mainly in opposition to the principle, but from time to time affirmed that he was in favour of the principle. It was nice that he did so, because one could not reach that conclusion listening to him. That is why I asked whether his party would allow a free vote on the matter when it came back to the House, or would allow a free vote with no whips when the subject matter was considered in committee. I doubt it very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the members appointed to the committee from all parts of the House will in the main be members who support the idea of televising the proceedings of the House. I am against this principle.

Broadcasting of House of Commons Debates

I would like to deal with what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said. He believes our proceedings must be televised so that the people of Canada will know what parliament is doing. Does he for one minute think that Parliament makes decisions as to how the country is administered? Surely a man of his experience in the House knows better than that. He went on to say that this is a major debating forum. The people of this country want to know where the decisions are made, where their protest letters should be sent, and how best they can get their problems considered. I will deal later with the question of how best they can have their problems dealt with and considered.

The hon. member went on to say that television in this House would significantly change the role of Members of Parliament and would even go so far as to change the dress of members. What is this place: is it a stage on which we are all prepared to act a part? We know some members of the House are already being handed scripts. Are they now to be handed the right coloured tie and shirt, along with the script to read, and act a part? Are they to be told, "This is a speech on wheat. The western farmers are mad. Be sure you act mad"? Are they to be told, "The middle-class will be confronted with a terrible burden because of the white paper on taxation. Be sure you act as if you are concerned and annoyed"? Is that the role of Members of Parliament? Mr. Speaker, we are representatives of the people. If we in this House forget that principle, we can no longer lay claim to the fact that we have representative government.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre went on to say that the same problems were posed when *Hansard* was first introduced. Television in this House would in no way be similar to *Hansard*, for a number of very clear reasons. The written word is far different from watching a picture and seeing the words spoken. The old adage of seeing is believing is still very true in Canada.

Today, because we have been subjected to the written word so much by the newspapers, people have become somewhat sceptical of what they read in the newspapers. Things are quoted out of context, which amounts to misinterpretation. It is said that seeing is believing. *Hansard* records what I say; it does not record how many people listen to me. Television will record how many people listen